



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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**TO:** Superintendents, Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, Special Education Coordinators, and Education Partners

**FROM:** Gail Taylor, Division Director, Standards and Assessments  
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**RE:** Spring 2006 Assessment Updates

**DATE:** May 29, 2006

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This memo provides updates on the following topics:

- Grade 11 NECAP Overview
- Grade 11 NECAP Pilot Testing
- Grades 3-8 NECAP Testing
- NECAP Test Administration Workshops
- NECAP Science Test Development
- Reminders

### **Grade 11 NECAP Overview**

The Vermont, Rhode Island and New Hampshire State Departments of Education recently began work on an 11<sup>th</sup> grade addition to the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP), which currently provides reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3 through 8, and writing assessments in grades 5 and 8. Measured Progress of Dover, NH, will continue to be the contractor for the NECAP program, including the 11<sup>th</sup> grade addition. The Grade 11 NECAP is scheduled to be pilot tested in November 2006 and will become operational in October 2007.

The Grade 11 NECAP will mirror the grades 3 through 8 testing program in the following ways:

- The tests will be designed to assess student achievement specifically on the Vermont reading, writing and mathematics Grade Expectations (GEs), specifically the skills and knowledge students should acquire by the end of grade 10.
- The high school assessments will be administered annually during the first 3 weeks of October, the same assessment window used for testing in grades 3 through 8. (Please note that the Grade 11 NECAP pilot test will occur in November, in 2006 only).

- Each content area test will include a variety of item types – multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, and in the case of writing, extended response.
- Items will challenge students at several levels of cognitive complexity (i.e., Depth of Knowledge) in accordance with the language and intent of the GEs.
- A variety of assessment reports will be provided at the State, District, School, Grade and Individual Student levels. Four achievement level categories will be used: Proficient with Distinction, Proficient, Partially Proficient and Substantially Below Proficient.
- Each year 25% or more of the test items will be released, along with scoring rubrics and student work samples at various score point levels. A detailed item analysis report showing how each student performed on each released item will be provided.
- Extensive opportunities for educators to be involved in development of the Grade 11 NECAP will be provided through Item Review, Bias-Sensitivity Review and Standard Setting.

The Grade 11 NECAP will differ from the grades 3 through 8 tests in two ways. First, each of the Grade 11 content area tests will be made up of two sessions of approximately one hour each, for a total of six hours. The grades 3 through 8 content area tests are each made up of three 45 minute sessions. Second, the Grade 11 writing test will cover three categories of writing – Writing in Response to Text, Informational Writing and Expressive Writing – and will be comprised solely of two extended response writing prompts, one per session. One prompt will be administered to all students. A second set of prompts covering the two categories of writing not addressed by the first prompt will be randomly distributed across students using a matrix sampling procedure. In contrast, the grades 5 and 8 NECAP writing tests are made up of long and short writing prompts, all of which are administered to every student, as well as multiple choice and short answer items covering 4 specific writing genres, writing structures and writing conventions.

### **Grade 11 NECAP Pilot Testing**

Pilot testing for the Grade 11 NECAP is scheduled for **November 14<sup>th</sup> through November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006**. All testing materials should be packed and ready for pick-up by 8:00 a.m. on November 20<sup>th</sup>. All Vermont schools with an eleventh grade will participate. All 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in each school will complete one session each of reading, writing and mathematics, each session lasting approximately one hour. Because the three sessions of testing can be completed in about 3 hours, it may be possible to schedule pilot testing for a single day. Although all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to participate in pilot testing, because no scores will be reported it is not necessary to schedule make-up sessions for students who miss some or all of the pilot testing. Detailed information on the Grade 11 NECAP pilot will be provided at the test administration workshops that will occur in early September (See Below).

### **Grades 3 through 8 NECAP Testing Window**

The second operational administration of the grades 3 through 8 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) reading, writing and math tests is scheduled for **October 2-25, 2006**. Although each school's test administration plan is determined by local administrators; the Department recommends completing all test administration by Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. If necessary, October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> may be used for final make-up testing, but should be reserved primarily for preparing testing materials for shipment back to the assessment contractor, Measured Progress. All testing materials should be packed and ready for pick-up by 8:00 am on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Also,

please be sure to consider possible conflicts with religious holidays or local priorities and events when creating the school's test administration plan. In particular, it should be noted that Yom Kippur falls on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the first day of the grades 3 through 8 NECAP assessment window. This may be a consideration for some schools, but not for others. The Department's objective is to provide as much time as possible to administer the assessments, and to leave it up to local administrators to determine the days within the assessment window that make the most sense for the school and the local community. Detailed information on the grades 3 through 8 NECAP assessment will be provided at the test administration workshops that will occur in early September (See Below).

### NECAP Test Administration Workshops

In early September a series of NECAP test administration workshops will be offered throughout Vermont. Test administration policies and procedures for the grades 3 through 8 NECAP testing will be covered during the morning sessions, and policies and procedures for the Grade 11 NECAP Pilot Testing will be covered in the afternoon sessions. The workshop schedule follows:

#### 2006 New England Common Assessment Program Workshops in Vermont

**\*Please register for one workshop only\***

Date	Times		Location	Seating Capacity
	Grades 3-8	Grade 11		
Wednesday, Sept. 6	9:30 – 12:00 pm	1:00 - 3:30pm	Burlington – Hampton Inn	125
Thursday, Sept. 7	9:30 – 12:00 pm	1:00 - 3:30pm	Stowe – The Stoweflake Inn	100
Friday, Sept. 8	9:30 – 12:00 pm	1:00 - 3:30pm	Sherburne - Killington Grand	125
Tuesday, Sept. 12	9:30 – 12:00 pm	1:00 - 3:30pm	St. Johnsbury – Comfort Inn	100
Thursday, Sept. 14	9:30 – 12:00 pm	1:00 - 3:30pm	W. Dover - Mt Snow Grand	100

Principals and test coordinators should plan on attending only the sessions that apply to their specific schools. At least one representative from each school that will be participating in either the Grades 3 through 8 NECAP testing or the Grade 11 NECAP Pilot should attend. Registration for these workshops is available on-line at <http://iRegister.measuredprogress.org>. Specific information on how to register was sent to principals in a separate mailing.

### NECAP Science

Vermont, Rhode Island and New Hampshire are in the early stages of developing a science assessment for the NECAP test series. Five assessment contractors responded to the science assessment RFP, with Measured Progress once again submitting the highest rated proposal. The science assessment, which will be comprised of three sessions of approximately 50 minute in length, will be administered each spring to students in grades 4, 8 and 11. The third session will focus on four broad areas of inquiry: Formulating Questions/Hypotheses, Planning/Critiquing Investigations, Conducting Investigations, and Developing/Evaluating Explanations. The inquiry session for grade 4 will be "hands-on," whereas 8<sup>th</sup> and 11 grade students will work with simulated data. In addition to a total science score, sub-scores will be produced for four reporting categories that include three domains of science (Life Science, Earth/Space Science, and Physical Science) and Inquiry. Pilot testing for NECAP Science will occur in the spring of 2007 (most likely during the first three weeks of May) and the new science test will become operational in the spring of 2008, again in early May. Further details on NECAP Science will be provided as they become available.

## Reminders

- **Enrollment Verification** – From **August 14<sup>th</sup> through August 25<sup>th</sup>** grades 3 through 8 principals or test coordinators will be able to confirm or update the numbers of tests that will be needed for the October NECAP administration, using Measured Progress' online services. Enrollment verification for high school principals or test coordinators is scheduled for **September 5<sup>th</sup> through September 15<sup>th</sup>**. Enrollment verification will help ensure that sufficient materials are shipped to the schools, helping to avoid last minute orders and possible delays. Detailed information on enrollment verification will be mailed to schools in early August.
- **Large Print Test Orders** – Orders for NECAP Large Print test booklets for all grade levels should be submitted to the Measured Progress Service Center (877) 632-7774) between **August 14<sup>th</sup> and August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006**. You will need to provide a student name and state ID number to complete each order. Large Print orders will be shipped directly to schools with the regular testing materials.
- **Performance Level Testing** – Detailed information on performance level testing for students with special assessment needs was forwarded to schools a few weeks ago in a separate mailing. Schools should be reminded that applications for performance level testing should be submitted to the Department by the end of the school year. For additional information, please contact Cindy Moran (Phone: (802) 828-0646; E-Mail: [cindymoran@education.state.vt.us](mailto:cindymoran@education.state.vt.us)) or Greg Wylde (Phone: (802) 828-1338; E-Mail: [gregwylde@education.state.vt.us](mailto:gregwylde@education.state.vt.us) ).

Thank you for your continuing cooperation and support. Unless indicated otherwise, please direct any questions or comments to Michael Hock (Phone: (802) 828-3115; E-Mail: [michaelhock@education.state.vt.us](mailto:michaelhock@education.state.vt.us)).